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"It is not Miss Fletcher," said Helen, hesitating over the words. "It is—Mr. Hastings."

"Why did you not tell me a day sooner?" asked Tom, in a hard, constrained tone.

"I did not know it till this evening," she replied. "The telegram came only an hour ago—just after we had finished tea."

"And you are glad?" Tom questioned, looking at her with a keen glance.

"Yes, I suppose so; it is my duty to be glad."

"This is good-by, then," said Tom, after some minutes of embarrassing silence.

"Shall I not see you to-morrow?" she asked, a little falter in her voice.

"No; I shall be off by sunrise for a last day in the valley. I can take the evening train at March's Bridge—it slacks there, and the conductor knows me, and will not object. If Mr. Hastings is what he should be, you will not want me; if he is not—shake hands, Helen. Don't look out the window when I go away. I should only think of you as looking a little later for Mr. Hastings' coming."

"Poor Tom," said Helen to herself, a few minutes afterward, as she heard his room door close with emphasis, "I wonder if Ralph ever bangs doors or gets into small rages! He never lumbers, at any rate, and how the porch floor *did* squeak when Tom walked across it!"

I think I can get down there," soliloquized Tom Ford, the next forenoon, peering over the rocky wall. "At least it is worth my while to try—it will save a mile of walking if I succeed." Swinging himself over, he crept cautiously downward. Half the descent had been made safely, when his foot slipped and he fell, carrying with him the rock to which he was clinging.

When he recovered consciousness he found himself lying at the bottom of the precipice, pinioned to the ground by a mass of rock and earth which had fallen upon him.

"Unlucky that I have not the use of both arms," he thought, having finished the contemplation of his situation. "Well, I must see what I can accomplish with one. Phew! how it pains me; I must have bruised it badly coming down."

As he spoke he attempted to lift the free arm, but it dropped powerless by his side. "Broken, as sure as fate!" he exclaimed, with a grimace of mingled pain and amusement. "Was ever a fellow in a sorrier predicament?"

"It won't do," he said, after a score of fruitless efforts to release himself. "I am here, and here I must stay till some one comes to my assistance." And thereupon he shouted at the top of his lungs for help. The valley gave back the echoes of his voice, but there was no other response.

Still, again and again he called—each time more weakly than before, for his strength was fast leaving him; but no lucky chance sent a person by within reach of that despairing cry. The pain of the broken arm was intense, and his cramped position added to his misery; his throat was parched with thirst, while the glare of the sun, as it rose higher, well nigh blinded him. In such agony as he had never dreamed of he lay as the weary hours dragged by, and the day journeyed toward its end.

Would help ever come? he wondered, straining his ears to catch the slightest sound.

The place was a lonely and deserted one—seldom visited, except by some wandering artist in search of the picturesque, and there was no one to miss him or grow anxious at his absence. Helen would take for granted that he had returned to the city, and so he would be left to perish slowly of thirst and starvation.

And while he was thus dying she would be laughing away the joyous moments with Mr. Hastings by her side. His fancy pictured the pair together, and he ground his teeth in impotent fury and despair.

Then, as day declined, and darkness, stealing through the valley, wrapped itself about him, half-delusive fancies came to make him forgetful of pain. Helen was beside him—he could hear her soft tones, feel the clasp of her hand; she did not love Mr. Hastings, but himself, and she had sought him out to tell him so. As the vision vanished he lost consciousness for the first time in his life.

"The view does not strike me as a particularly fine one, my dear," said Mr. Hastings, balancing himself on the railing of the bridge, and surveying the scenery with a glance of calm disapproval.

"It is not even pretty," Helen replied; "but—I wanted to come." She was looking very intently at the railroad track—a pleasant object for contemplation, as any lover of beauty will admit.

"Suppose, then, that we go home," mildly suggested Mr. Hastings, offering her his arm.

"Wait a moment—the train is coming," answered she, as the shriek of the locomotive was heard. The train came—slacked almost to an absolute stoppage—Helen's eyes watched it the while very eagerly—but no Tom took advantage of the delay to spring upon the platform. Had he changed his mind and returned to the farm-house? It was not likely; in his present state of feeling he would not court a meeting with Mr. Hastings. Helen felt—she knew not why—a vague consciousness of anxiety.

"Ralph," turning suddenly toward her lover, "I want to go up into the valley—it will not be dark for more than two hours yet; will you go?"

"Wait till to-morrow," he answered, mindful of his tight boots, and in no mood for rock-climbing. "You are pale, Helen—yes, and actually shivering, too. This air is fever-and-agueish," wrapping her shawl more closely about her as he spoke. "Come, let us get home as soon as possible."

"I will not! I mean I can not!" Helen replied, excitedly. "You must go with me, Ralph; I am afraid something has happened to T—Mr. Ford."

"Who is Mr. Ford?" asked he, with a look which was by no means lover-like.

"He is a gentleman who has been boarding at Mrs. Kidder's, this summer," replied Helen, the color rushing over her face in spite of her efforts to appear indifferent. "He was to return to the city this afternoon, taking the train here, and he has failed to do so, and—"

"Can not a man change his mind if he sees fit?" Mr. Hastings interrupted, half-jestingly, half-angrily. "Don't be so foolish, my darling," he went on; "it is not very complimentary to me your fretting about this fellow the first evening of our meeting. We will go back now, and if he is not at the house, somebody shall be sent in search of him, I promise you."

"It may be too late then," said Helen. "You must come with me, Ralph," taking his hand.

"I will do nothing of the kind!" answered the irate lover; "and if you go it will be in disobedience to my express commands." Mr. Hastings looked really imposing in his wrath.

"When was I ever known to obey you—or any one else?" retorted Helen, with flashing eyes. "I would go now if"—trying to say something tragic, but failing—"if I were certain that I should lose my way and be compelled to stay out all night in the cold." And shaking off his detaining grasp, she was gone in a moment.

"I suppose that every woman must be either a simpleton or a vixen," philosophically observed Mr. Hastings, as he wended his solitary way homeward; "but such an exhibition of temper and willfulness on Helen's part was really very unpleasant."

The walk was a long one, and night was fast falling when Helen reached the entrance of the valley. She and Tom had explored it together frequently; but now, in the shadowy twilight, it looked so wild and forbidding, that she shrank back involuntarily. Would it not be worse than folly to risk her life among its rocks and chasms, because of a mere nervous fancy. As she stood irresolute—feeling her courage fast ebbing, a faint cry seemed to fall upon her ear. She listened eagerly. Did some one call "Helen," or was it only her imagination? "It was like Tom's voice," she said to herself, with a shiver, "only so faint and unearthly." Her timidity had all vanished now, and she went resolutely on, falling over prostrate trees, climbing up the rugged sides of projecting rocks, urging her way through tangled masses of vines and underbrush, heedless of her cut and bleeding hands and feet, her fast-failing strength, and intent only upon reaching the spot whence that cry had come.

"Shall I ever find him?" she thought, despairingly, as her foot caught in a tree-root and she fell once more. Putting out her hand to aid herself in rising, she touched something which was neither stone nor wood. She grasped it eagerly—it was an arm in a rough coat sleeve—a masculine arm evidently, and the discovery sent a thrill of horror to her heart.

An instant more, and the injured man moved a little and murmured "Helen," in a feeble, almost inaudible tone.

Helen did not shriek, nor faint, nor call him "darling," as a heroine would have done. She only said

quietly, "I am here, Tom; tell me, are you hurt badly?"

"Is it you, Helen, really you?" he answered, excitement lending him strength. "My arm is broken, and there is a mass of earth and rock upon me. I have been lying here ever since morning, and had given up all hope of being rescued. Did you come to look for me—I have thought of you continually."

"Yes," returned Helen, hastily, thinking that further questions might prove embarrassing, "and now I am going back for help. I will not be long; you shall be safe at home within two hours, I assure you. Keep up a good heart till I come back."

"How did she know that I failed to take the train?" queried Tom, mentally, as the sound of her footsteps died away. Bruised and aching as he was, he would not just then have changed places with Mr. Hastings.

"Don't make excuses for him, Tom," said Helen, in a vexed tone, and walking restlessly to and fro as Tom himself had done on the evening before Mr. Hastings' expected arrival.

"Why not?" asked Tom, watching her from the lounge on which he lay. "I admit that he behaved badly; but then he had reason to be aggrieved. Answer his letter, Helen, and say that you forgive him." He stopped, feeling that heroism and self-sacrifice could go no further.

"I will never see him again!" she answered, her slender, dark eyebrows coming a little closer together. "I know now that I never had any real affection for him—thank fortune I found it out before it was too late."

"Poor Hastings! I am sorry for him," rejoined Tom, gravely, trying to arrange the sling in which his disabled arm rested, "mildly sorry—that is, I pity myself a hundredfold more."

"Why?" asked Helen, with the air of a seeker after useful information.

"Because you do not care for me," he replied.

"But—I think I do care for you, Tom," she said, coming to his side to adjust the refractory handkerchief. "I did not want to; but you know it is so natural to like people whom you have compelled to feel grateful to you."

"I know," answered Tom, very well satisfied with the explanation. "And, after all, Helen, circumstances which would not permit me to be a hero allowed you to be a heroine—it is really too bad."

"You should be very thankful to circumstances," laughed Helen, "for if you had saved my life I would have been your mortal enemy always; and, until you tumbled over that precipice I thought you rather an awkward person, and felt very well content to marry Mr. Hastings."

—F. D. Washburne.

THE MAN AND THE MOON.

THE moon peeped forth from a vailing cloud—
Fringing the rift with light,
And cautiously peered through a leafy shroud,
In the mid-hour of the night.

And, lo! in a forest dense and dark,
Beheld she a man at work;
And many a flashing, steely spark,
With many a hard-breathed jerk;—

For might and main, with pick-ax and spade,
Upheaved he the stones and mold,
As though in that somber forest glade,
He were digging for gems or gold.

The moonbeams trembled, as down they fell,
Into a narrow cave;
And they saw (what I hardly dare to tell)—
That this was indeed a grave!

And soon a coffin, all covered with black,
Was stealthily laid within,
And the stones and the mold were hurried back,
To hide a terrible sin.

Then whispered the moon to a star near by—
Hiding her face so fair—
With faltering lips and a quivering sigh,
"A neighbor is buried there!"

His night's work done, with pick-ax and spade,
And whistling a careless lay,
The man sped on through the forest-glade,
But turned from the moon away.

He sped along, nor glanced he behind,
Whistling his careless tune;
But now he starts at each shriek of the wind,
And can not look at the moon!

—Sallie A. Brock.